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the Royal Astronomical Society, and was a member of the most important scientific societies.

ALFRED E. BEACH died in New York on January 1st. He was one of the proprietors of the *Scientific American* and had made several important inventions, the best known of which is that of pneumatic tubes adjusted for carrying parcels and cars. The deaths are also announced of Robert F. Welsch, a writer of ichthyology; of Prof. A. P. Kostycher, of the Russian Agricultural Department, known for his investigations of soils and agricultural products; of Dr. A. V. Brunn, professor of anatomy in Rostock, and of Dr. Ludwig Teichmann, formerly professor of anatomy in Cracow.

#### UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL NEWS.

A BILL to establish a National University at Washington has been introduced in the Senate and House of Representatives. It provides for its government a board of sixteen regents, with the President of the United States at its head, and a University Council, embracing the board and twelve educators, representing institutions belonging to different States.

A TELEGRAM to the *Evening Post* states that Elon College, in North Carolina, has received an endowment fund of \$100,000 from a citizen of New York City, whose name is not at present made public.

PRESIDENT Mark W. Harrington, of the University of Washington, writes that he proposes to establish a department of terrestrial physics and geography in the University, and will be indebted to authors and publishers who will send to the University publications relating to these subjects.

THE N. Y. *Medical Record* states that the Chicago College of Physicians and Surgeons is making arrangements to amalgamate itself with the University of Illinois

It is stated that Mrs. E. G. Kelly, of Chicago, will erect a chapel at a cost of \$100,000 for the University of Chicago, as a memorial to her brother.

DR. DOCK, of the University of Michigan, has

been appointed professor of pathology and bacteriology at Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia.

WE learn from the *American Geologist* that Prof. W. I. Blake, of New Haven, Conn., has accepted a professorship of geology and mining in the University of Arizona.

DR. HÜFNER, of Tübingen, has been called to the chair of physiological chemistry at Strassburg, vacant by the death of Hoppe-Seyler. Dr. Julius Bauschinger, of Munich, has been made associate professor of astronomy and head of the bureau of calculations in Berlin.

ACCORDING to the *Academische Revue* the number of students matriculated at the University of Berlin is 5368: 486 in theology, 1812 in law, 1258 in medicine and 1812 in the philosophical faculty. There are 776 foreigners, 219 from America, 198 from Russia, 32 from Great Britain, 22 from France, etc. 40 women are admitted as auditors.

#### CORRESPONDENCE.

##### THE THEORY OF PROBABILITIES.

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: It is easier to make true and misleading statements in the subject of probabilities than anywhere else. In this class I should be inclined to place the remark made by Professor Mendenhall, near the close of his article in your issue for December 20, regarding a deal in whist in which each of four players had all the cards of one suit. He says:

"The chances against any other particular distribution of the cards were just as great as against this and \* \* \* the result of every deal of the cards is just as remarkable as this."

To the first part of this statement it is of course impossible to take exception; the second part seems to me misleading, if not untrue. To take another case. The chances of my tossing heads one hundred times running are precisely those of my tossing the particular succession of heads and tails that I do toss in any hundred throws of a coin. But is the former case no more *remarkable* than the latter? It is so much more remarkable that it at once arouses the